

PORT AND HARBOR ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 28, 2011

Session 11-09, a Regular Meeting of the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission was called to order by Acting Chair Howard at 5:00 p.m. on September 28, 2011 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS CARROLL, HARTLEY, HOWARD, WEDIN

ABSENT: ULMER, HOTTMAN, ZIMMERMAN

STAFF: PORT AND HARBOR DIRECTOR HAWKINS
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN
FIRE CHIEF PAINTER

AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no public comments.

RECONSIDERATION

There were no reconsiderations scheduled.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. August 24, 2011 Regular Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved by consensus of the Commission.

VISITORS

A. Fire Chief Bob Painter, Christine K Fire Presentation

Fire Chief Painter gave his comments under new business.

STAFF AND COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOROUGH REPORTS

A. Port and Harbor Director's Reports for September 2011

Harbormaster Hawkins reviewed his staff report.

Question was raised about the area that isn't being dredged because of hydrocarbons. Harbormaster Hawkins said there isn't an answer yet. It is a small area and they will stay out of it with the dredge. He said it is diesel and doesn't know who will be responsible to address it.

B. Lease Committee

There was no Lease Committee report.

C. Port and Harbor Improvement Committee

Commissioner Hartley reported the Committee will begin putting together their proposal for Council to consider regarding bonding. He expects the recommendation to Council will be to bond for \$5 million, about half of the amount needed. The other half is anticipated to be matched by state funds.

Harbormaster Hawkins added that they received a contract from Fish and Game for the load and launch ramp for phase 1 of the process, which is engineering, and it is funded by federal and state monies with no local match required. He will be meeting with them to discuss phase 2.

PUBLIC HEARING

There were no public hearing scheduled.

PENDING BUSINESS

No pending business items were scheduled.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Discussion of Possible Ordinance Regarding Unattended Oil Fire Stoves in the Homer Harbor

Harbormaster Hawkins reported that he attended the briefing from the Christine K fire. He came away from the briefing surprised at how many of the harbor fires over the years that originated from galley stoves, and more so how many galley stoves found that were running away or having problems they were able to address before it became an issue requiring the Fire Department. He did some research of other harbors and found that Kodiak has an ordinance against unattended fires that includes a \$75 fine, but it is not real clear. Seward didn't have much, and Homer has nothing in code regarding it.

Fire Chief Painter explained that Lead Fire Investigator Gary Thomas was given great access to the vessel after the fire and during deconstruction after it was hauled out. His investigation determined that the probable cause of the fire was the stove. Somewhere along the line there had been a retrofit of the carburetor that feeds fuel to the burner. It was established from discussion with the manufacturer and comparing pictures that it was improperly installed and allowed fuel to flood the burner. According to the vessel owner it had been that way for quite some time. Chief Painter said that during his 20 years with the fire department there have been several vessel fires and near misses contributed to galley stoves. Harbormaster Hawkins expressed an interest in developing a local ordinance that would prohibit unattended use of galley stoves, and based on local experience Chief Painter said he is supportive of it. He explained that had the vessel was rafted on the outside and had it been rafted differently it would likely have caused greater damage to the other vessels. Nationally, vessel fires don't contribute a huge fire impact and the Coast Guard does not track vessel fires locally. Being a maritime community, vessel fires do impact the community. Chief Painter said he researched some stove manufacturers and all of the stove manuals state things like "Do not operate the stove unattended", and "When unattended keep the cylinder valves closed", so they are intended to be operated when they can be monitored. Another issue that needs to be addressed is requiring smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors that operate independent of the vessel's electrical system.

The Commissioners expressed their understanding of the concern about the unattended stoves, but indicated they are not supportive of an ordinance as there are other causes for vessel fires like battery chargers and electric heaters, to name a few and they can't all be regulated. Other discussion points included:

- There aren't a lot of alternatives for heating vessels through the winter.
- There could be issues with liability from boats freezing up in the harbor based on an ordinance like this.
- Vessel owners could notify the Harbormaster's office if their boat will be unattended with the stove running.
- This is a public awareness issue as time and time again the causes of fires in the harbor are the galley stoves.
- Designating a section in the harbor for boats that have the heater on in the winter time.
- There are fire buttons that can be put above the stove that sound an alarm when the temperature reaches a certain point.
- Making the Harbormasters office responsible for monitoring unattended stoves or alarm systems would impact harbor staffing and could be a liability issue as well.

The Commissioner's appreciated the information but felt there could be some other alternatives and did not take any action to move forward on an ordinance of this nature.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. Weekly Crane and Ice Report
- B. Deep Water Dock Report
- C. Pioneer Dock Report
- D. Pioneer Dock Ferry Landings Report
- E. Water Usage 2011
- F. Monthly Statistical & Performance Report
- G. AAHPA 32nd Annual Conference Agenda
- H. Letter from Nuka Point Research & Planning Group Re: CIRA Advisory Panel Acceptance Dated September 13, 2011
- I. Strategic Plan
- J. Lease Expirations as of 2/17/11
- K. Commissioner Attendance Schedule for City Council Meetings

Acting Chair Howard asked if this is open to Commissioners and if they need to register to attend. Harbormaster Hawkins said if Commissioners plan to attend the whole conference they should register, but if they just want to sit in on certain parts they can come and join the table. There are great speakers lined out, there are 32 harbors in the association and 27 are showing up, and there are 85 people registered.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

There were no audience comments.

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Harbormaster Hawkins informed the Commission about his appointment to the CIRA Advisory Panel.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

There was no Councilmember in attendance.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Acting Chair Howard had no comment.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Hartley had no comment.

Commissioner Wedin apologized for missing meetings and thanked the Clerk for the phone call to remind him of tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Carroll hopes there are presenters at the Conference talking about the AIS system. With the threats and worries about navigation in the lower Cook Inlet, the AIS system really takes care of virtually everything. There is a chart and it gives you the name of the vessel coming, their rate, speed, and route. He hopes to have the system on his boat as he is out a good deal of the time in the winter and wants the traffic, like the cargo ships and tugs, to know he is there. He added the he plans to talk to Harbormaster Hawkins about an oil sipping bilge in the harbor.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 26, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____